

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MUSCAT 01427 170700Z

15
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----- 002055

R 170525Z NOV 76
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2672

S E C R E T MUSCAT 1427

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS PFOR MU US
SUBJECT: MILITARY ASPECTS OF U.S. -OMAN RELATIONS

REF: (A) MUSCAT 1342; (B) MUSCAT
GQEROV KC) MUSCAT 1364; (D)
MUSCAT 1374

1. SUMMARY. THE OMAN GOVERNMENT'S DESIRE TO DILUTE ITS TRADITIONAL MILITARY DEPENDENCE ON THE BRITISH BY STEPPING UP ITS COOPERATION WITH THE U.S. HAS SURFACED AGAIN IN RECENT WEEKS. AMONG THE FORMS THIS HAS TAKEN IS A SUGGESTION FOR THE U.S. TO ASSIGN A MILITARY ATTACHE TO MUSCAT. ALSO, SULTAN PERSONALLY IN RECEIVING COMIDEASTFOR AND STAFFDEL VAN DUSEN UNDERSCORED HIS RECEPTIVENESS TO GREATER MILITARY COOPERATION, AND WENT OUT OF HIS WAY PUBLICLY TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HE WELCOMES U.S. FLEET VISITS. END SUMMARY.

2. IN EMBASSY'S RECENT CONTACTS WITH UPPER LEVEL OMANGOV OFFICIALS, INCLUDING SULTAN QABOOS, IT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY PLAIN THAT OMAN IS SEEKING CLOSER AND MORE EXTENSIVE BILATERAL MILITARY RELATIONSHIP WITH US. THIS HAS MANIFESTED ITSELF, FOR EXAMPLE, IN (A) SULTAN'S OWN REMARKS TO COMIDEASTFOR AND AMBASSADOR ON OCTOBER 17, (B) SULTAN'S IMMEDIATE ACCEPTANCE OF INVITATION TO PAY VISIT TO VISITING USS DUPONE, (C) REPEATED EXPRESSIONS TO STAFFDEL VAN DUSEN OCT 31/NOV 1 OF STRONG OFFICIAL INTEREST IN HELP OF MILITARY SORT, ESPECIALLY TRAINING, FROM THE U.S., (D) SULTAN'S OWN DIRECT STATEMENT

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 MUSCAT 01427 170700Z

TO STAFFDEL WELCOMING MORE DIRECT MILITARY COOPERATION AND

(E) OMANIS' STRONG PITCH DURING STAFFDEL VISIT FOR ASSIGNMENT OF US MILITARY ATTACHE, PREFERABLY NAVAL, IN MUSCAT.

3. WHILE NO ONE PERSON OR ONE SINGLE FACTOR IS BEHIND THIS PUSH, THE PRIME MOVER, IN OUR JUDGMENT, IS SULTAN'S EQUERRY TIM LONDON. IT WAS PROBABLY LONDON (IF NOT QABOOS HIMSELF) WHO ORCHESTRATED THE REPEATED SUGGESTIONS TO STAFFDEL THAT A US MILATT BE ASSIGNED HERE. BRIG. LONDON FOR SOME YEARS HAS ADVOCATED CLOSER RELATIONS BETWEEN OMAN AND USG, PARTLY OUT OF BASIC BELIEF THAT IT BEHOOVES OMAN TO DEVELOP MORE MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE GREAT POWER WHOSE BASIC IDEOLOGY AND POLICIES ARE COMPATIBLE WITH OMAN'S, AND PARTLY FROM CONVICTION THAT BRITAIN'S STAR IS FALLING FAST AND THAT OMAN CANNOT AFFORD TO REMAIN WITHOUT A VIABLE OPTION FOR RECEIVING MILITARY TRAINING, GUIDANCE AND ASSISTANCE. BEING MILITARY MAN HIMSELF, AND KNOWING BETTER THAN ANYONE THAT QABOOS IS PARTICULARLY AT EASE IN MILITARY SURROUNINGS, LONDON MAY BELIEVE THAT HE AND OTHERS AT OMANI DECISION-MAKING LEVEL COULD MAKE MORE PROGRESS TOWARD THEIR GOALS VIS-A-VIS THE US IF AMEMBASSY MUSCAT INCLUDED A PERMANENT MILITARY LIAISON OFFICER. HE MAY ALSO SURMISE THAT SUCH A PERSON BY HAVING DIRECT CHANNEL TO PENTAGON COULD "PRODUCE RESULTS" MORE QUICKLY AND EFFECTIVELY. WE CAN ONLY GUESS AT DEGREE TO WHICH THESE ESSENTIALLY ARE ELEMENTS IN LONDON'S OWN THINKING, ON WHICH HE HAS PERSUADED HM, RATHER THAN THE SULTAN'S OWN IDEAS. BUT OUR INCLINATION WOULD BE TO ATTRIBUTE THIS LINE OF THINKING HEAVILY TO LONDON HIMSELF.

4. OMAN OF COURSE IS IN MIDST OF PREPARATIONS FOR USE AND DEVELOPMENT OF MASIRAH ISLAND AFTER NEXT SPRING. THIS IS PROBABLY ONE REASON WE ARE BEING HIT JUST AT THIS TIME FOR CLOSER MILITARY COOPERATION. AS FOREIGN MINISTER ZAWAWI HAS HINGED REPEATEDLY THIS SUMMER AND FALL, AND MADE PARTICULARLY EXPLICIT IN MEETING WITH ASST SECRETARY ATHERTON OCT 15, OMAN WANTS HELP OF ONE KIND OR ANOTHER IN RETURN FOR REGULAR AMERICAN USE OF MASIRAH.

5. EXACTLY WHAT THE OMANIS WANT MOST FROM US IS HARD TO SAY. THEY HAVE REFERRED MOST FREQUENTLY TO TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ADVISE ON MILITARY SIDE, AND TO TECHNICAL HELP ON THE CIVIL

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 MUSCAT 01427 170700Z

SIDE. NO DETAILS HAVE BEEN SPECIFIED, NOR ANY INDICATION OF PRIORITY. WE IMAGINE THEY WILL REFRAIN FROM BEING MORE EXACT UNLESS AND UNTIL WE TELL THEM WHAT VALUE MASIRAH HAS FOR US SO THEY CAN GET AN IDEA HOW HIGH A PRICE TAG MAY BE REASONABLE TO APPLY. OUR "DIALOGUE" ON MASIRAH IN RECENT MONTHS HAS BEEN ONE-SIDED, AND SO LONG AS WE CONTINUE TO PLAY OUR CARDS SO CLOSE TO THE CHEST, THE OMANIS CAN ONLY GUESS AT THE DEGREE OF INTEREST WE HAVE IN THE ISLAND. THEIR

ONLY MEANS OF PRESSURING US TO BEGIN SERIOUS TALKS ON MASIRAH IS TO MOVE TOWARD RESTRICTING THE MODERATE USE WE NOW MAKE OF THE ISLAND. WHILE THEY MIGHT MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION AT ANY TIME, WE THINK THEY WILL HESITATE FOR SOME WHILE YET FOR FEAR THAT OUR INTEREST IS NOT VERY STRONG AFTER ALL AND THAT THEY WILL SIMPLY BE LEFT EMPTY-HANDED, AND PERHAPS ALSO BECAUSE THEY WANT TO SEE FIRST HOW THE NEW U.S. ADMINISTRATION SHAPES UP.

6. WE SHOULD KEEP IN MIND THAT THERE ARE AND PROBABLY WILL CONTINUE TO BE DIFFERING VIEWS AMONG KEY OMANGOV OFFICIALS AND ADVISERS ON JUST HOW CLOSE OMAN SHOULD GET TO USG. THEREFORE, FEELERS WE GET FROM ONE QUARTER MIGHT NEVER TAKE SHAPE AS OFFICIAL REQUESTS, SINCE THE PARTICULAR SPONSOR MAY FAIL TO GET NECESSARY SUPPORT ELSEWHERE IN THE SYSTEM, OR AT LEAST ENCOUNTER SERIOUS DELAYS. IDEA FOR U.S. NAVAL SURVEY MISSION, PUT FORWARD IN SEPTEMBER IN WASHINGTON BY VISITING LT. COL. SALIM AL-GHAZALI, IS EXAMPLE OF THIS. HE HAS NOT RAISED THIS WITH US DEPITE SEVERAL OPPORTUNITIES SINCE HIS RETURN, AND DESPITE RECENT BROACHING BY OMANIS OF IDEA OF U.S. MILITARY ATTACHE, THERE IS NO SIGN THAT GHAZALI (WHO LEAVES AT END NOVEMBER FOR YEAR-LONG SENIOR STAFF COURSE IN JORDAN) HAS FOUND SUPPORTERS IN OMANI HIERACHY FOR THIS CONCEPT. INDEED, AS DEPT AWARE, OMANGOV HAS NOT MOVED FORWARD AT ALL TO IMPLEMENT NAVAL PERSONNEL TRAINING PROGRAM WHICH THEY OFFICIALLY REQUESTED, AND TO WHICH WE PROVIDED RAPID FAVORABLE RESPONSE, IN SUMMER 1975.

7. FOR OUR PART, WE SEE NO NECESSITY OF EARLY RESPONSE TO OMANIS REGARDING THEIR SUGGESTION ASSIGNING MILATT TO MUSCAT. SUGGESTION STRIKES US AS PLOY TOWARD ALTERING EXISTING USG POLICY OF LIMITED INVOLVEMENT IN OMANI MILITARY AFFAIRS. WE DO NOT BELIEVE LACK OF DAO HAS HANDICAPPED USG RESPONSIVENESS TO LOW VOLUME OF FMS SALES AND TRAINING REQUESTS OVER PAST FEW YEARS, THOUGH PRESENCE OF MILATT OF COURSE WOULD ENABLE SIGNI-
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 MUSCAT 01427 170700Z

FICANT EXPANSION OF CONTACTS WITH OMANI MILITARY OFFICERS AND GENERAL INTERNAL MILITARY INTELLIGENCE GATHERING. IF OMANIS PURSUE IDEA WITH US, WE PLAN (SUBJECT TO POSSIBLE INSTRUCTIONS) TO RESPOND THAT WE KNOW OF NO PRESENT OR PROPOSED FIELDS OF MILITARY COOPERATION THAT WOULD APPEAR TO REQUIRE SUCH PERMANENT STAFFING, AND TRY TO DRAW OUT JUST WHAT THEY HAVE IN MIND.

8. DEPT REPEAT OTHER POSTS AND MILITARY ADDRESSES AS DESIRED.
WOLLE

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, MILITARY ATTACHES, INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 NOV 1976
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MUSCAT01427
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760428-0526
From: MUSCAT
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761140/aaaabinp.tel
Line Count: 163
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 76 MUSCAT 1342
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17 JUN 2004 by CunninFX>; APPROVED <18 OCT 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MILITARY ASPECTS OF U.S. -OMAN RELATIONS
TAGS: MASS, PFOR, MU, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006